

The standard of comparison in the languages of Daghestan

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17th Conference on Typology and Grammar for Young Scholars
19–21 November 2020

Standard of comparison (SoC)

(1) *The tree* *is* *higher* *than* ***the house***
COMPAREE PARAMETER+INDEX MARKER **STANDARD**

- ✓ Constructions expressing **quantitative** comparison
 - ✗ qualitative (e.g. My room is like yours) or equative comparison (e.g. My room is as big as yours)
- ✓ Constructions in which the SoC is constituted by a **noun phrase**
 - ✗ verbal (e.g. Being a student is better than *working*) or adverbial phrases (e.g. There is better than *here*)

Typological studies

- Stassen (1985) “Comparison and Universal Grammar”
 - Comparative types: **Separative**, **Allative**, **Locative**, Exceed, Conjoined, Particle
 - Languages of Daghestan: none
- Stassen (2013) “Comparative Constructions” <http://wals.info/chapter/121>
 - Comparative types: **Locational**, Exceed, Conjoined, Particle
 - Languages of Daghestan: Lezgian and Hunzib

Languages of Daghestan → rich nominal spatial morphology, a good testing ground to check the typological findings by Stassen

TALD

- Part of the “Typological Atlas of the Languages of Daghestan” ([TALD](#))
- Follows the methodological approach of this project:
 - data collection from the available literature on the languages spoken in Daghestan
 - creation of a database including the collected data
 - building of maps for the visualization of results
- [Chapter](#) in TALD including introductory text, database and maps (in progress)

SoC in the languages of Daghestan

- In the languages of Daghestan, the SoC is usually marked with a **spatial form**, i.e. an inflected form of a nominal normally expressing a spatial relation, cf. (2)
- The adjective in these constructions is usually not inflected for degree

(2) Tindi (Avar-Andic < Nakh-Daghestanian)

<i>wac:i</i>	<i>kʲ'e-ja</i>	<i>rehǎ-ʔ:i:</i>
brother	two-num	year-nm.obl.erg
<i>muk'u-w</i>	<i>ija</i>	<i>jac:u-č'i</i>
little-m	cop	sister.obl-cont(ess)

‘The brother is two years younger than the sister.’ (Magomedova 2012: 79)

Which spatial form?

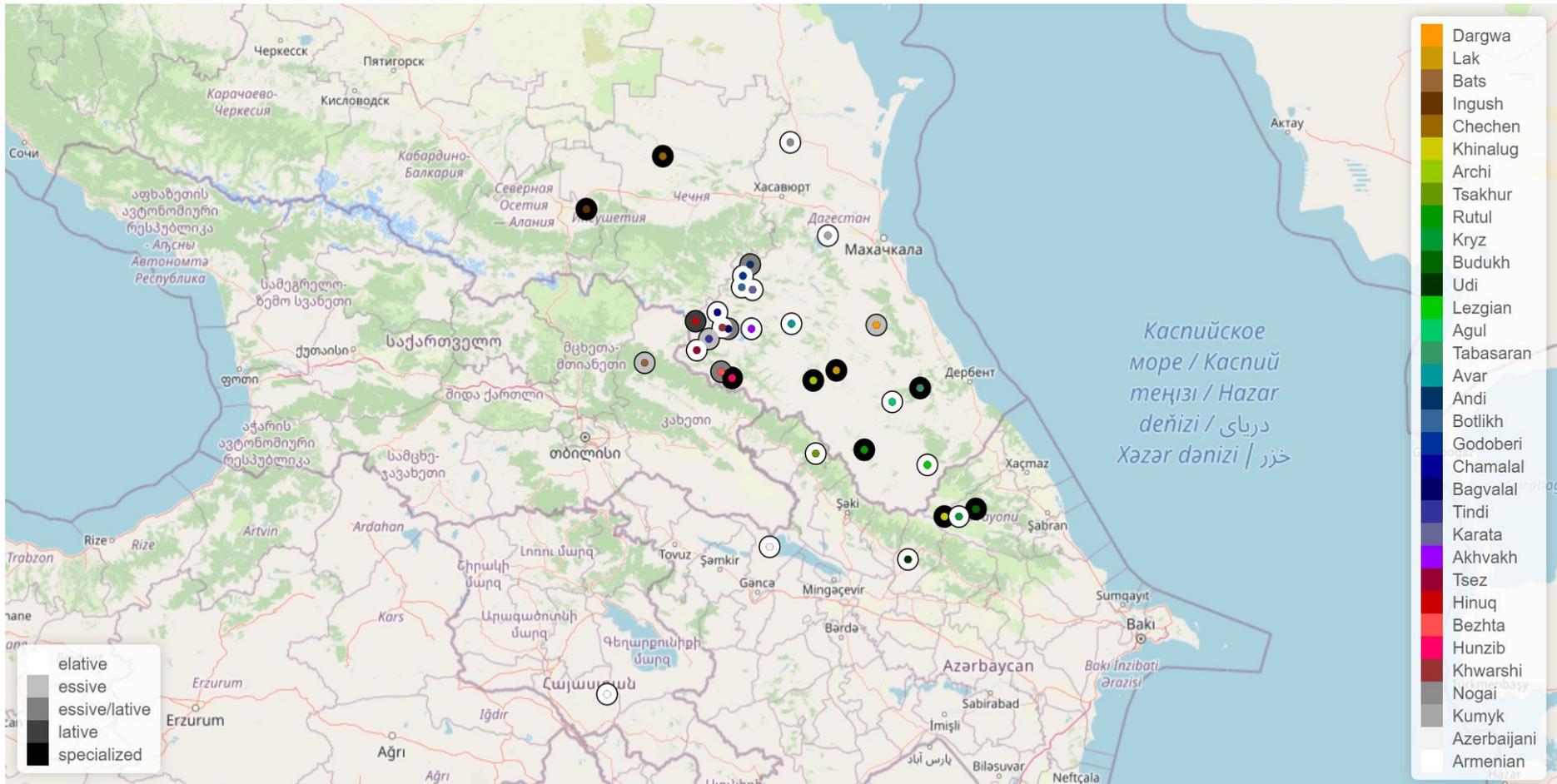
- Daghestanian languages are well-known for their rich inventories of spatial cases, and usually feature bimorphemic systems combining **directionality** (elative, essive, (al)lative, etc.) and **localization** (*on* a surface, *inside* a container, etc.) markers (cf. Testelec 1980, Comrie & Polinsky 1998, Comrie 1999, Kibrik 2003, Creissels 2009, Daniel & Ganenkov 2009)
- For the encoding of the SoC, there seems to be variation with respect to both the directionality marker and the localization marker employed, and several combinations are attested

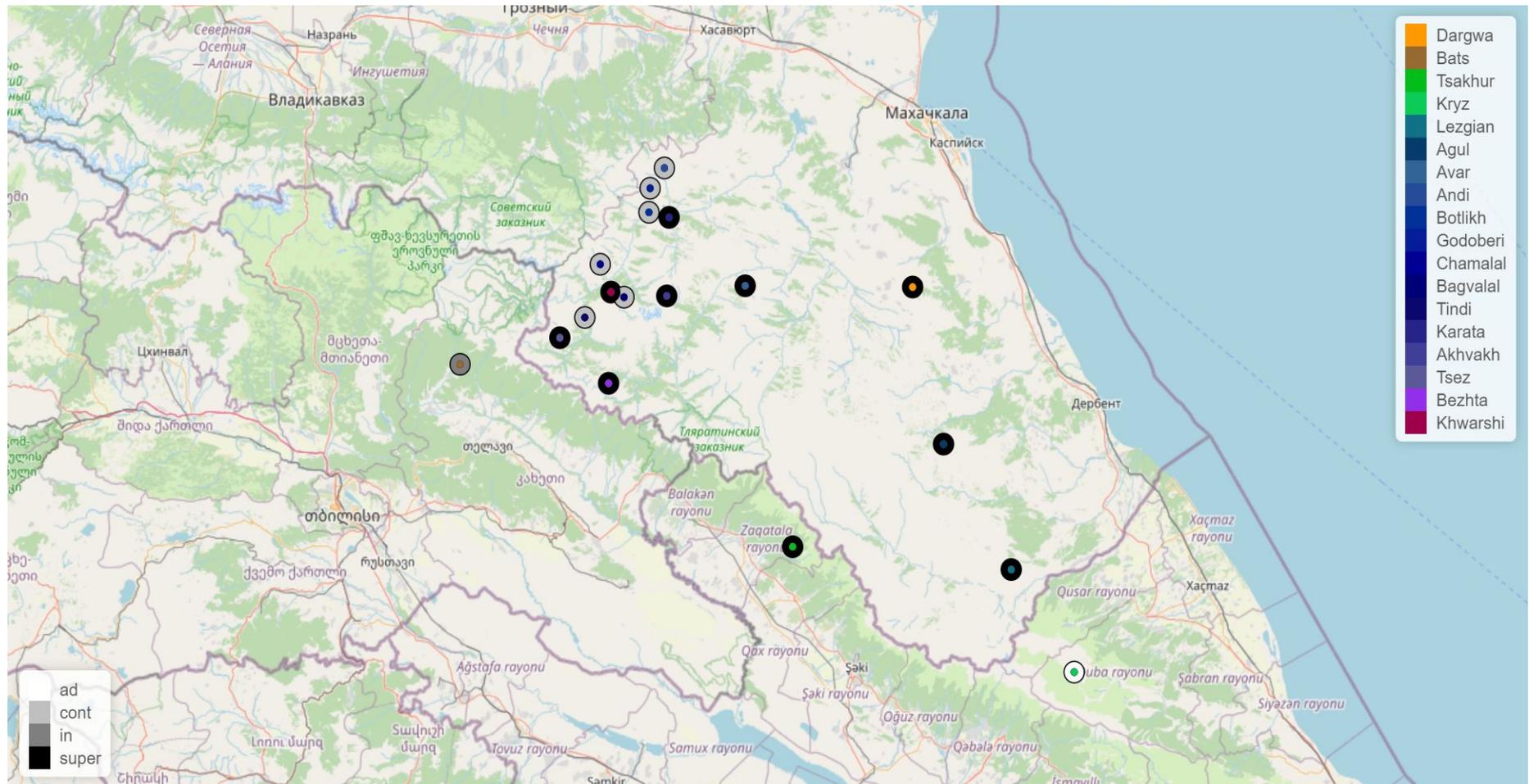
Spatial forms

	SUPER		CONT		OTHER	
EL/TRANS	St. Avar	-da-sa	Botlikh	-č'u-ku	Kryz (AD-EL)	-v-ar
	North. Akhvakh	-g-une	Chamalal	-č'-o:	Udi (ABL)	-χun
	<u>Bagvalal</u>	-la-s:	Godoberi	-č'u-ru	Kumyk (ABL)	-dan/-den
	<u>Karata</u>	-a-gal	<u>Karata</u>	-č'o-gal	Nogai (ABL)	-den
	Agul	-l-as			St. Azerbaijani (ABL)	-dan/-dən
	St. Lezgian	-l-aj			Armenian (ABL)	-ic'
	Archi	-t:-iš				
	Rutul (Luchek)	-li				
	Tsakhur	-l-e				
	Hinuq	-λ'o-s				
	Tsez	-λ'-aj				
	Xvarshi	-λ'a-zi				
	Itsari	-li(:)-r				
ESS	St. Dargwa	-či-CM	Tindi	-č'i	Bats (IN.ESS)	-χ
	Mehweb	-če-CM				
	Kubachi	-ži-CM				
ESS/LAT	Bezhta	-ba/-voj	Andi	-č'u		
			<u>Bagvalal</u>	-č		
LAT					Hinuq (ALOC-LAT)	-de-r

Specialized markers

		Spatial origin
Archi	- <i>χur</i>	residual spatial usages
Budukh	- <i>wor</i>	relative - <i>r</i>
Rutul (Mukhad)	- <i>qaʔ</i>	
Tabasaran	- <i>t'an</i>	relative - <i>an</i>
Chechen	-(<i>a</i>) <i>l</i>	
Ingush	- <i>l</i>	
Hunzib	- <i>ya:</i>	
Lak	- <i>jar</i>	
Khinalug	- <i>q'il:i</i>	relative - <i>li</i>





Daghestanian data vs. typological findings

- Spatial forms
 - 73% in Daghestan (24 out of 33 core languages) vs. 47% in (Stassen 1985, 2013) - predominant in Eurasia; 4 out of 9 languages of Daghestan featuring specialized markers show a clearly spatial origin
- Elative markers
 - 71% in Daghestan (17 out of 24) vs. 63% in (Stassen 1985)
- Essive markers
 - 25% in Daghestan (6 out of 24) vs. 24% in (Stassen 1985)
- (A)lative markers
 - 4% in Daghestan (1 out of 24) vs. 11% in (Stassen 1985); but N.B. 3 out of 6 languages of Daghestan featuring essive markers show essive/lative syncretism

Comparison and space

- Spatial relations → basic conceptual domain that provides a source for expressing more abstract relations (cf., among others, Langacker 1987; Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Heine et al. 1991; Croft 2003)
- Comparison as one more case of abstract location - as existentiality, possession, causativity (Stassen 1985: 58)
- The “Source Schema”: “one of the most widespread sources for comparatives, if not the most widespread” (Heine 1997: 115)
- But how do we explain that some languages select the source schema, whereas other languages select the location or goal schema?

Comparison and word order (Stassen 1985)

- In searching for possible explanations for the occurrence of different spatial forms marking the SoC, Stassen (1985) finds some correlations between comparatives and word-order types; for the **“locational” type**:
 - **separative** → preference for SOV
 - **locative** → SOV or verb-initial
 - **allative** → almost exclusively verb-initial
- But there is an intermediate parameter explaining these correlations: temporal chaining
- Comparative type > type of temporal chaining > basic word order

Comparison and temporal chaining (Stassen 1985)

- Apparent correlations between comparative types and types of temporal chaining in a language; for the “**locational**” type:
 - **separative** → *absolutely deranked anterior consecutive construction*
 - **locative** → *absolutely deranked simultaneous construction*
 - **allative** → *absolutely deranked posterior consecutive construction*
- Deranking = one of the predicates is reduced in rank = it has a non-finite form
- “Absolutely deranked” = deranking occurs regardless of subject identity of the two predicates (e.g. *John* went outside when *his parents* arrived)
- Anterior (deranking involves the earlier event) vs. posterior (deranking involves the later event)

Botlikh (Andic) - SoC CONTELATIVE

- Basic word order SOV, but high flexibility
- General converbs (= aorists) are used for preceding actions; apparently no restrictions in terms of subject identity
- Specialized converbs do not show such restrictions either; they can indicate both preceding and subsequent actions

(4) *iš:i* *rec:iχ:-u* *waša* ***w-ac'a-rudi***
we.excl rejoice-aor son **m-reach-temp**
'We rejoiced when our son arrived (= was born).' (Alexeyev & Verhees Forth.)

(5) *den j-ik'-a* *hu-w* ***β-i-dera*** *j-iβ-u*
I f-be-aor dem-m **come-inf-until** f-stand-cvb
'I waited until he arrived.' (Gudava 1962)

Mehweb (Dargwa) - SoC SUPERESSIVE

- Basic word order SOV, but high flexibility
- General perfective converbs are used for preceding actions; apparently no restrictions in terms of subject identity
- Specialized converbs do not show such restrictions either; they can indicate both preceding and subsequent actions

(6) *ixi-šu* *barhi* ***b-uq-un-i-able*** *dursi* *d-ak'-ib*
this-ad(lat) sun **n-enter:pfv-aor-ptcp-ante** girl f1-come:pfv-aor
'When the sun rose, a girl came to him.' (Sheyanova 2019: 239)

(7) ***luk'-eče*** *nuša-jni* *deč'* *b-aq'-i-ra*
write:ipfv-pstr we-erg song n-do:pfv-aor-ego
'Before writing, we sang a song.' (Sheyanova 2019: 242)

Summary

- The SoC in the languages of Daghestan is most often marked by a spatial form
- Even in languages featuring specialized comparative suffixes, a possible spatial origin is sometimes detectable
- Directionality markers: elative(/translative) > essive(/lative) > lative
- Localization markers: SUPER > CONT > AD, IN
- The distribution of values on maps does not allow to detect any noteworthy areal or genealogical clustering
- An exception is constituted by Andic languages, which form a cluster based on the localization marker employed (forms in -č'- indicating contact with some entity)

Summary

- The Daghestanian data adhere quite well to the cross-linguistic picture, and include some of the most typologically frequent strategies to mark the SoC
- Even within the group of locational comparatives the hierarchy relative > essive > lative matches the cross-linguistic tendencies
- However, the correlations between comparative types and types of temporal chaining + basic word order identified by Stassen (1985) do not seem to hold for Daghestanian languages (converbial clauses behave almost identically across the family)

Open questions and further steps

- The question of localization markers: asymmetries in the terminology used in the literature; need for systematization to compare languages in a reliable way
- The origin of specialized markers
- The diachrony of SoC markers (cognates)
- Other non-spatial functions of SoC markers
- The role of language contact (?)

Thank you



Botlikh, Daghestan

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